

CONFIDENTIAL

REPORT

MUSLIM MEETING \* JULY 29, 1959

On Wednesday, July 29, 1959, I attended a meeting of the organization or movement known as the Muslims. The meeting was held at Scott Auditorium, 601 High Street in Newark. I was accompanied by Wilbur McNeil, a State employee of 118 Barclay St. Newark.

This Muslim meeting, one of the four held in Newark each week, was attended by approximately 250-300 men and women, all of whom were Negro. The average age of the group appeared to be 25 - 30 years.

Without being present at the formal opening of the meeting it seemed that the purpose of this public gathering was to spread the Muslim teaching and to recruit new members.

When Mr. McNeil and I arrived at the auditorium we were greeted by several of the followers who were gathered in the doorway. Upon entering the room we were asked to give our names and addresses to a young lady who was seated at a table inside the hall. As we were given seats a young man, one of the Muslims, was addressing the audience. His theme was on the movement, its history and development, the problems of the "black man" and "so-called Negro" in North America and the evils and sufferings inflicted on blacks by the white man. His 20 minute talk was punctuated by frequent references to a visual aid, a black board on which an U. S. flag was drawn under which were the words suffering, death and slavery; next to these words was a picture of a black figure hanging from a tree limb (a lynching scene). On the other side of the board was a picture of the flag of Islam, (a white star with a quarter moon) and the words freedom, equality and justice. This speaker went on to praise the teachings of the national leader, known as Elijah Muhammed.

He also made constant references to the Muslim teaching; how the white man has stripped the black man of his heritage, culture and pride; how the whites have abused the black people especially the black women.

It should be noted that the followers have dropped their surnames in favor of an initial (X or Y). This is done, they say, because the names which "so-called" American Negroes now have were given and taken from their white slave masters after the Emancipation. Hence, the New York leader of this movement is known as Malcom X.

After a 20 minute talk the speaker introduced a Captain Leo who was the principal speaker at the meeting. (Captain Leo is known to us as Dr. Leo McCollum, a dentist located on Johnson Avenue, Newark).

Captain Leo spoke for about an hour and a half, building on the foundation laid by the previous speaker. With the skill of one obviously well indoctrinated in the Muslim teaching and the practice of deductive logic (taking one basic fact and stretching it to many varied conclusions and meanings) Captain Leo continued to expound on the superiority of black over white, Islam over Christianity and the eventual extinction of the white man. He stressed the importance of unity among the black men for the protection and improvement of the group. This speaker also used the blackboard to present visual aids to the delight of the audience who expressed their approval with frequent applause and vocal assent.

At the conclusion of his remarks Captain Leo spent about 10 - 15 minutes urging people to join the movement. The approach was, "now is the time for all black men to join together." Approximately 15 young men responded to the appeal.

OBSERVATIONS

As has already been indicated from all observations this movement consists of younger people, average age 25 - 30. Mr. McNeil and I evaluated the group in attendance in terms of their background and present socio-economic status. (We were acquainted with some of the members). It was our opinion that there were many of the down-trodden, the frustrated, dissatisfied and violence-prone individuals in the group. We felt that these were the persons most susceptible to and likely to accept the teachings of the Muslim leaders or other demagogic personalities. Of particular importance to the Mayor's Commission on Group Relations, Newark Police Dept. and other responsible agencies and leaders should be the fact that this small but expanding group is a potential source of racial tension and conflict in this area. This is inherent if not directly presented in their teaching. Example: One of the speakers at this meeting stated: "Christianity teaches you to turn the other cheek when someone strikes you, but let one of them (a white) hit a Muslim and see what happens." Also there are frequent references to "we must protect our black women."

The growth of this group and the development of any tension incidents in Newark involving these people should be viewed in the context of this teaching.

OTHER FACTS

There is a kind of military atmosphere created at the meeting. In fact, I was told that the movement is sometimes known as the Army of Islam. Note that they have titles such as lts., captains, etc. Several of the followers, male and female, are stationed at points throughout the room. Their function as far as I could see, was to maintain strict order and attention. They stand in a very rigid position and are relieved by each other in a most military-like manner.

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As each person enters the hall he is given an envelope on which the word "charity" is printed. At the conclusion of the meeting each person is asked to leave a financial contribution in this envelope. The Pittsburgh Courier, a Negro weekly newspaper, pamphlets, books and articles are sold to raise funds.

A mass meeting of the Muslim group will be held on Sunday, September 6 at the Mosque Theatre. The speaker will be Elijah Muhammed, their national leader.

SEE ATTACHED CLIPPINGS

Respectfully submitted,

*Walter Chambers*

Walter D. Chambers, Ass't Director  
Mayor's Commission on Group Relations

## RACES

### The Black Supremacists

"Every white man knows his time is up," snapped the frail-looking Negro in the embroidered pillbox to 5,500 Negroes packed into Manhattan's St. Nicholas Arena one hot afternoon last week. "I am here to teach you how to be free. Yes, free from the white man's yoke. We want unity of all darker peoples on the earth. Then we will be masters of the United States, and we are going to treat the white man the way he should be treated." Roared the crowd "That's right! More! More!" For more than two hours, as shouts and applause rose in regular cadences, the scowling, incendiary speaker obliged by pouring out his scorn upon all "white devils," "satisfied black men," the "poison" Bible, Christianity's "slave-master doctrine," and America's "white for white" justice.

The purveyor of this cold black hatred is known to some 70,000 Negro followers (he claims 250,000) in 29 U.S. cities as Elijah Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah, head of a stern, demanding, disciplined black-supremacist religious sect called "the Moslems."\* Calmly feeding the rankling frustration of urban Negroes, the Moslems reach deep among the least-educated, lowest-paid Negroes jammed into big-city slums from Harlem to Los Angeles. Muhammad's virulent anti-Americanism and anti-Semitism, plus his elite corps of dark-suited, shaven-polled young "honor guards," has lifted him well beyond the run-of-the-street crackpot Negro nationalist groups. The Moslems are of rising concern to respectable Negro civic leaders, to the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, to police departments in half a dozen cities, and to the FBI.

**Men Named "X."** Elijah Muhammad was born Elijah Poole, son of a Baptist minister, in Sandersville, Ga. on Oct. 7, 1897 later moved with his family to Detroit. One momentous day, he tells the faithful, he met one Fard Muhammad, who revealed himself to be "Allah on earth"—on earth, that is, just long enough to pick the "messenger" for his black-supremacy doctrine. Messenger Elijah dropped his "slave-master name" of Poole, took up the spiritual surname Muhammad

(lacking religious surnames, his ministers just use "X"). He founded Temple No. 1 in 1931, but soon ran into difficulties.

Detroit police arrested him in April 1934 on charges of contributing to the delinquency of a minor (six months' probation), and in November some of his would-be followers got disgusted with his teaching, drove him out of town. He set up permanent headquarters in Chicago, preached against the white man's draft registration in World War II. When FBI agents tracked him to his mother's Chicago home in September 1942, they found him rolled up in a carpet under her bed. He was in federal prison at Milan, Mich. for draft dodging until 1946, later made a play for recruits among ex-convicts. His New York leader Malcolm X, once Malcolm Little, is an ex-convict who has been arrested for larceny in two states.

An ascetic little man, Elijah sternly demands that his followers give up tobacco, dope and alcohol, bathe often, pray toward Mecca five times a day, even if it means falling upon their knees in the streets. Moslem women should dress modestly, use no lipstick, never allow themselves to be alone in a room with any man except their husbands. Attacking all forms of dependence upon whites, Elijah set up a Moslem restaurant, cleaning business, barbershop, butcher shop, grocery store and department store on Chicago's South Side, a café in Harlem, a café and a farm near Atlanta, also bought himself a luxurious, 18-room house near the University of Chicago. He founded "Universities of Islam" in Chicago and Detroit (the latter accredited by the local school board through the ninth grade) to teach his dogma to children and teen-agers. Sample from his official temple creed "There is no good in white men. All are the children of the devil."

Muhammad also trained muscle. Each congregation has its "Fruit of Islam" force of young men, who take judo training in their temples, are commanded by Muhammad's son-in-law burly "Supreme Captain" Raymond Sharif. The F.O.I. protects its racist chief as if he were in

constant danger of assassination. At each mass meeting, the F.O.I. frisks every male who attends, while "Sisters" in flowing white robes and headpieces stand inside a separate entrance (segregation by sexes also) to frisk each woman, put all potential weapons such as nail files in checking bags.

**"Worse Every Day."** Muhammad's doctrine of total hate found a ready medium in some Negro newspapers, which began to exploit Negro hopes and fears after the Emmett Till case. The Pittsburgh Courier Negro national weekly, and the Los Angeles Herald-Dispatch, booming West Coast Negro paper, not only gained attention from his personal column, but also found their circulations boosted fast by Moslems who hawked the papers on street corners as a spiritual duty. Such leading Negro Harlem politicians as Congressman Adam Clayton Powell (pastor of the Abyssinian Baptist Church) and Manhattan Borough President Hulan Jack have curried Moslem favor, even though full-fledged Moslems are enjoined not to vote.\*

Thus far the Moslems have been strictly law-abiding—a fact that worries some cops more than minor outbreaks of violence. "It's getting worse every day," says a Los Angeles police official, "and I only wish I knew what it's going to take to light the fuse." The Moslems themselves talk of 1970 as their D-Day, expansively predict that before that time the big white nations will have eliminated each other with atomic warfare and Black Africa will stand unchallenged. Says Chicago Urban League's Negro Director Edwin C. Berry: "A guy like this Moslem leader makes a lot more sense than I do to the man in the street who's getting his teeth kicked out. I have a sinking feeling that Elijah Muhammad is very significant."

\* Among the top-ranking Negro villains of the Moslems and African Nationalist fringe groups: U.N. Under Secretary Ralph Bunche, who won a Nobel Prize for making peace between Israel and the Arabs, hence is condemned as "the George Washington of Israel."

# Extremist Negro cult locked out

INDIANAPOLIS, Ind. (UPI)—A Methodist church threw a monkey wrench into an extremist Negro religious cult's plans to hold a mass meeting yesterday by locking the group out of the church sanctuary.

The "Moslem" followers of "Messenger of Allah" who preaches supremacy of the black race, switched their meeting to a Baptist church, then cancelled it entirely rather than meet in the presence of police and newspaper reporters.

After almost three hours of indecision and curb stone conferences, Raymond Sharrieff of Chicago, who identified himself as Muhammad's son-in-law and "Supreme captain" of the sect, announced the cult members were giving up plans to meet.

Sharrieff said Muhammad hadn't come to Indianapolis anyway, but would make an appearance here some time in the future.

Muhammad's followers apparently were thrown into confusion by the Gorham Methodist Church board of trustees' eleventh hour decision to deny them use of the sanctuary. More than 500 had been expected but only about 50 showed up.

The church was locked.

The group milled around outside the church, listened while police Inspector Carl C. Schmidt read them Indiana's laws against inciting to race hatred. Then they announced that they were going to

the Greater Zion Baptist Church where they have held meetings previously.

At the Baptist church, Schmidt told the cult members he intended to send two of his Negro officers into the building to read again a section of the Indiana law.

He said the statute makes it unlawful "to create, advocate, spread or disseminate hatred for or against any person...by reason of race, color or religion" and fixes a maximum penalty of 10 years' imprisonment and \$100,000 fine.

Cult members protested they had suffered "no such indignities at mass meetings in New York, Washington, Chicago and other cities.

"I don't know about the law in those cities, but I have letters from Indianapolis Negro citizens who have asked us to watch this meeting," Schmidt replied. "I can't help it because you have been given bad publicity."

When Sharrieff cancelled the meeting, the Negroes — women dressed in flowing white robes and men in gleaming, silky dark suits — climbed into automobiles and drove off. Most of the cars carried Illinois and Wisconsin license plates.